Video coding is widely used in our daily life. Due to its high computational complexity, hardware implementation is usually preferred. In this research, we investigate both ASIC hardware design approach and reconfigurable hardware design approach for video coding applications.

First, we present a unified architecture that can perform Discrete Cosine Transform (DCT), Inverse Discrete Cosine Transform (IDCT), DCT domain motion estimation and compensation (DCT-ME/MC). Our proposed architecture is a Wavefront Array-based Processor with a highly modular structure consisting of 8 x 8 Processing Elements (PEs). By utilizing statistical properties and arithmetic operations, it can be used as a high performance hardware accelerator for video transcoding applications. We show how different core algorithms can be mapped onto the same hardware fabric and can be executed through the pre-defined PEs. In addition to the simplified design process of the proposed architecture and savings of the hardware resources, we also demonstrate that high throughput rate can be achieved for IDCT and DCT-MC by fully utilizing the sparseness property of DCT coefficient matrix.

Compared to fixed hardware architecture using ASIC design approach, reconfigurable hardware design approach has higher flexibility, lower cost, and faster time-to-market. We propose a self-reconfigurable platform which can reconfigure the architecture of DCT computations during run-time using dynamic partial reconfiguration. The scalable architecture for DCT computations can compute different number of DCT coefficients in the zig-zag scan order to adapt to different requirements, such as power consumption, hardware resource, and performance. We propose a configuration manager which is implemented in the embedded processor in order to adaptively control the reconfiguration of scalable DCT architecture during run-time. In addition, we use LZSS algorithm for compression of the partial bitstreams and on-chip BlockRAM as a cache to reduce latency overhead for loading the partial bitstreams from the off-chip memory for run-time reconfiguration. A hardware module is designed for parallel reconfiguration of the partial bitstreams. The experimental results show that our approach can reduce the external memory accesses by 69% and can achieve 400 MBytes/s reconfiguration rate. Detailed trade-offs of power, throughput, and quality are investigated, and used as a criterion for self-reconfiguration. Prediction algorithm of zero quantized DCT (ZQDCT) to control the run-time reconfiguration of the proposed scalable architecture has been used, and 12 different modes of DCT computations including zonal coding, multi-block processing, and parallel-sequential stage modes are supported to reduce power consumptions, required hardware resources, and computation time with a small quality degradation. Detailed trade-offs of power, throughput, and quality are investigated, and used as a criterion for self-reconfiguration to meet the requirements set by the users.

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The public is welcome to attend.